

ADMINISTRATIVE - INTERNAL USE ONLY

D/FBIS Chrono

## ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

SUBJECT: (Optional)

FROM

EXTENSION

NO.

FBIS-0192/86

Director, Foreign Broadcast  
Information Service

DATE

15 May 1986

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and  
building)

DATE

OFFICER'S  
INITIALSCOMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom  
to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

RECEIVED

FORWARDED

1. Deputy Director for  
Science and Technology  
Room 6E45 - Headquarters

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Some thoughts on the  
3 cultures question.

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FBIS-0192/86

15 May 1986

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Science and Technology

FROM: 

Director, Foreign Broadcast Information Service

SUBJECT: FBIS IG Survey, "Three Cultures"

1. I have intentionally missed your March deadline in order to ensure the most thoughtful consideration of this question. In addition to specific group activities,  chaired a working group representing all FBIS elements. I believe that the steps we will take are responsive to the IG report and your memorandum, are consistent with the Modernization Program, and will be enthusiastically accepted by the overwhelming majority of FBIS personnel.

2. I acknowledge that cultural differences are real, but feel the picture painted in the IG report is highly colored. I'd say they arise from the nature of the functions performed by the three broad groups we are talking about, i.e., the editors, the media analysts, and the language officers, and from the nature of the people who do each type of work best.

3. Broadly speaking, the editor can be characterized as the activist, time-sensitive operations officer and action coordinator, the analyst as the reflective, disciplined writer and thinker, and the language officer as the language expert, with specialized area or substantive knowledge, who reviews foreign press material and selects for translation the material that responds to intelligence requirements.

4. These are three different sorts of activity, or "disciplines," and they require three quite different sorts of people to work in them successfully. This fact, which is easily grasped intuitively, was well verified by a study we commissioned in the early '70s that was carried out by the Psychological Services Staff of OMS. This study covering a sample of  employees showed a remarkable correlation between the individual and the profile characterizing his "discipline."

5. First, there are the formal entrance requirements for each of these three groups. Our editorial staff must be news oriented, must write well--but above all--must be action oriented and have a bent toward coordinating the work of others in a fast moving fashion. Their backgrounds are "generalist" and the nature of their work pushes them into a type of management very early in their careers. The media analysts, on

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the other hand, are far from generalists. They must have the temperament for deep research in specialized areas and the advanced degrees that attest success in this. They must be able to write well, sometimes but not usually against tight timelines. The language officer, like the media analyst, works in a specialized field but it is one of using language skills on a specific data base--with two or more languages plus a substantive background usually required before hiring. Neither of the latter groups is "management" oriented at lower levels, but changes in recent years provide a clear ladder to management positions for both linguists and analysts if they are interested.

6. It is the nature of their disciplines that gives rise to the "cultures." Some media analysts and foreign documents officers can sniff that editors "don't know anything." Some editors look down their noses at documents officers for being over-deliberate and delivering a product that isn't timely; and some in both groups can rail at media analysts for being "elitist" when they allegedly tell them how to go about their business. While such expressions are vented, most FBIS officers are sufficiently aware of the other groups' duties to know that they make real contributions to the overall effort.

7. These statements decrying other "cultures" are really expressions of pride of craft, and the feeling that one's own job is especially useful and valuable should not be discouraged. Our task, as you note in your memorandum, is to prevent these acknowledged differences from resulting in inter-group hostilities which can adversely affect morale and work.

8. The first change concerns our JPRS activity. With the move to Reston permitting us to bring JPRS back into the main operation, we will be able to make a major reorganization of this activity, folding it into Production Group and eliminating many duplicative functions. We will retain the JPRS name and make its overall supervision part of our Production Group's front office function, but it will no longer be quite the separate entity it once was.

9. A recommendation, which I support, is to take a watching brief over the FBIS headquarters' editorial operations. Hitherto they have been divided for partly functional and partly historical reasons between the DAILY REPORT and JPRS. But, with the startup of the FBIS automated publication system in 1987, it will be possible to amalgamate to a very high degree all the DR and JPRS editorial processes into one component.

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This will provide a greater degree of uniformity between the two products, emphasizing their identity as FBIS products, and provide (1) a more ample base to which editorial personnel returning from overseas field assignments can return, and (2) an exceedingly useful interface between Production Group and Operations Group officers, where each can learn from the other. To our computers it is all the same where the input comes from and, to the extent we can do all our editing in a centrally managed way, we will be ahead of the game.

10. One of the questions which must certainly be addressed is that of transfers between the groups and the feeling that one group may have the edge over another as regards career advancement. It may be of interest to note that the two most senior officers in Operations Group started their careers in Production Group and Analysis Group, that the two most senior officers in Production Group have spent most of their careers in Operations Group, and that the senior Analysis Group officer has spent much time in his career in Operations Group. Once management ability is recognized, in my view, no distinctions are drawn among the groups. This is a fact that is often lost sight of and must constantly be reiterated when discussions take place in FBIS over who has the advantage over whom when it comes to career advancement. We continue to encourage employees with skills in more than one group's area of expertise to explore career opportunities in other groups.

11. The same applies to non-permanent rotations from one group to another. Each group has its own entrance requirements but we can continue to emphasize the utility for both FBIS and the individual employee of short-term rotations as a means to bring about greater inter-group understanding. For this purpose I am supporting another of the group's recommendations, that all junior professional EODs have short rotations in the other groups in their first year or so of duty.

12. Another recommendation which I think has merit is the formation of a standing "Focus Committee" composed of representatives of the three groups which would meet regularly to assess field bureau performance in meeting consumer needs in areas of coverage, responsiveness, and quality of product. This will give all groups an active voice in field bureau oversight and contribute to an understanding of the roles of the various groups in keeping FBIS as a whole in step with consumer needs. The committee could include JPRS products, as well, in its review.

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13. The group looked at the question of a reorganization along geographical lines but the consensus was that staff economies, relative ease of management, and assignment flexibility would be entirely lost if we switched the management of our field installations to a decentralized, geographically based system. The group's view, in which I concur, was that the argument from function far outweighed the argument from geography.

14. In sum, we will certainly reorganize JPRS. We will probably reorganize our Headquarters editorial operations depending on our experience with Automation, and we will push inter-group rotations and joint activities to the extent that is consistent with our mission. I think there will always be some "pride of craft" but am optimistic that we can keep it within limits that are constructive, not destructive.

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DDS&T/FBIS [redacted] (15 May 86)

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